The Substance of Socialism

John Spargo

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BOOKS BY JOHN SPARGO

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The Substance of Socialism

BY

JOHN SPARGO

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FOREWORD

THE first part of this little volume consists of an address which, somewhat abridged and modified, was delivered at a Socialist Conference in Boston. The second part consists of a paper contributed, in June, 1909, to the *North American Review,* and reprinted here, slightly revised, through the courtesy of the editor and publishers of that periodical. The third and last consists of a stenographic report of a lecture delivered in Cooper Union, New York City, under the auspices of the People's Institute, revised for this publication.

Probably no article upon the subject has ever been more widely discussed than the paper from the *North American Review.* Hundreds of newspaper editorials were written about it, and thousands of correspondents wrote me from all parts of the world con-

cerning it. Most of the newspaper comments were such as to gratify any writer, and the letters were such as to indicate general satisfaction.

But one newspaper writer, the gentleman who writes for the *Boston Transcript* under the pseudonym of "The Social Settler," was greatly disturbed to discover that I was not what he termed an "orthodox Socialist." He went further, and charged that I was not acting in good faith; that I was the leader of a small group of Socialists who make it their business to do propaganda "window dressing"—"glossing over the disagreeable features of Socialism" to catch unwary gudgeons with our bait.

Now, of course, I care rather less than nothing at all about being "orthodox." For me the only orthodoxy is truth, error the only heresy. While I have called myself a "Marxist," and believe that I have fairly earned the right to do so by many years given to earnest and careful exposition of Marx's theories, I have never regarded Marx

as a pope, nor believed that the last word of wisdom was spoken by him. From time to time, therefore, I have freely and frankly expressed opinions upon matters of theory and policy contrary to those of Marx.

While, therefore, I am not at all concerned about my orthodoxy, I am somewhat jealous of my good name, and cannot lightly pass over the charge that I am engaged, with some "assistants," in misrepresenting the Socialist position and carrying on a propaganda of deceit. My connection with the Socialist movement has involved too much suffering and sacrifice during many years to lend support to such a charge as that.

It is not for the sake of my reputation as an honest and sincere thinker that I refer here to the atrabilious charge of "The Social Settler," however. That would be conferring too much dignity upon an undignified criticism. I desire only to make plain the fact that, except in the manner of stating it, there is not the slightest difference between my general position and that taken by Marx, Engels,

Liebknecht, Kautsky, and others whose "orthodoxy" is unquestioned. Marx and Engels made it perfectly clear in the *Communist Manifesto,* more than sixty years ago, that they were not aiming at the abolition of private property; that only that capitalistic form of property which was used to exploit the workers was attacked. Liebknecht, Kautsky, and others, have laid special emphasis upon the same point. Kautsky's *The Social Revolution* and Vandervelde's *Collectivism* may be referred to for proof of this. In a remarkable manuscript, referred to and quoted from in the following pages, Liebknecht not only laid stress upon this point, but also upon the fact that the greatest possible consideration for the present privileged classes would be observed. He wrote:

"Even those who now enjoy privileges and monopolies ought to be made to understand that we do not propose to adopt any violent or sudden measures against those whose position is now sanctioned by law, and that we are resolved, in the interests of a

peaceful and harmonious evolution, to bring about the transition from legal injustice to legal justice with the greatest possible consideration for the individuals who are now privileged monopolists.

"We recognize that it would be unjust to hold those who have built up a privileged situation for themselves on the basis of bad legislation personally responsible for that bad legislation, and to punish them personally.

"*We especially state that in our opinion it is the duty of the State to give an indemnity to those whose interests will be injured by the necessary abolition of laws contrary to the common good in so far as this indemnity is consistent with the interests of the nation as a whole.*"

If the reader will procure and read carefully Liebknecht's little pamphlet, *Socialism: What It Is and What It Seeks To Accomplish,* he will see that Liebknecht took in general a position identical with that taken by myself in the following pages. My own

Karl Marx: His Life and Work may also be referred to.

The fact is that for many years, owing to causes into which it is not possible to enter here, a gross travesty of Marxian Socialism has been commonly put forward as a faithful account. Now, at last, American Socialism is beginning to develop a literature of its own, and to throw off the shackles of an impotent and crude "Marxism" which caricatured every essential feature of Marx's teaching. I hope that I may be pardoned for referring to Mr. Morris Hillquit's admirable work, *Socialism in Theory and Practice,* and my own *Socialism* in this connection.

It is my earnest hope that this little volume may help to give the reader a clearer and juster view of the great Socialist movement of to-day than has heretofore generally prevailed.

J. S.

Raymond Cottage,
Bennington Centre, Vt.,
Beginning of August, 1909.

I

THE SOCIALIST HOPE

I.

IN that pathetic nightmare of melodrama and pessimism, *The Iron Heel,* Mr. Jack London observes that for a long time it has been sufficient to damn any propaganda or movement simply to call it "Utopian." With due allowance for the exaggeration of the statement, it must be admitted that it contains important elements of truth. "O, it is altogether Utopian!" cries the hard-headed, practical man of affairs when he is asked to consider the claims of Socialism, and then he smiles complacently, satisfied that the last word of wisdom has been said. To consider it any further, he thinks, would be a grievous waste of precious mental energy, and of time which might be more profitably employed in the market place.

Now, what is there in that word "Utopian" which makes it so terrible as an epi-

thet? What do we mean when we denounce a movement or a propaganda as Utopian? Why, simply that it is visionary and out of reach; that howsoever beautiful its aims may be they are beyond our present powers of realization so far that working to attain them does not commend itself to our practical worldly sense. It is the contemptuous sneer of the hard-headed practical man at the "dreamer of dreams."

It is not such a terrible thing, after all! To hitch our wagon to a star, as Emerson advised us, is to be guilty of being Utopians. For if our star is really a star, and not a mere lantern hung out to deceive us, we shall never reach it with our wagon; the end of our journey will be far short of the star. If, knowing this, we aim at the stellar goal we may not reach, we are Utopians and fit subjects for the reproaches of our more practical fellows who hitch their wagons to the nearest street lamps instead of to stars. So there are many things worse than being a Utopian

— to be a pulpit perverter of the Gospel, for example, or even a legislator with one hand constantly employed in grasping the rewards for faithful service to Privilege. One would rather be known as a dreamer of beatific dreams than as the alderman who sold his vote to a public service corporation seeking a franchise.

There is some significance in the fact that Jesus was a dreamer, a Utopian of the Utopians, while Judas was a very "practical" man. In the verdict of History the dreamer has an honored place, while the practical man is remembered only with scorn. The figures that loom largest in history are the dreamers who were sneered at as Utopians by the hard-headed practical men of their time. Take, for example, the Bible and scan the roll of its great characters. Do you not find that the names that shine with the brightest luster are those of the great dreamers and Utopians? The practical priests inside the church have for the most part been mercifully for-

gotten, but the prophets outside, all of them dreamers and Utopians, have been gloriously remembered, their names being blazoned in imperishable letters upon the deathless page. From Moses to Isaiah and Ezekiel, down to Jesus and John, all the prophets were dreamers, mocked by the practical men of their day. Isaiah foretelling the coming of a time when they who plant vineyards shall eat the fruit thereof, and Jesus praying "Let Thy kingdom come!" were Utopians quite as truly as Plato, Sir Thomas More, Saint Simon or Robert Owen.

Columbus was the dreamer; those who mocked him were the practical men of the time. It was a practical man who thought to silence the dreamer, Robert Stephenson, by asking him what would happen if his "steam horse" should meet a cow upon the tracks, and who could not see any humor in the quaint reply, "It wad be verra awkward for th' coo." It was the practical man who sneered at Morse's dream of the electric tele-

graph and Marconi's wonderful vision of wireless telegraphy. To be counted among the dreamers is not, after all, an unenviable fate: it is a glorious company, this host of the once derided dreamers, now honored and sung!

In one sense, Socialism is a dream and the millions of its adherents are dreamers. They look forward to a time when neither the black shadow of poverty nor the scarlet shadow of war shall oppress mankind. They wait the day when no child's hunger-cry shall distress the hearts of men and women, the fulfillment of the ages-old dream of human brotherhood. The faith of the Socialist in the coming of a better and brighter day is invincible. If that is what is meant when it is said that Socialists are Utopians, a plea of guilty must be entered. Every Socialist worthy the name is a dreamer. He dreams the dream of Moses upon Sinai, of Jesus upon the Mount; the dream that was Lincoln's, the dream by which all who look to the future for the

Golden Age are inspired. His heart holds dear a sublime faith in the coming of a time when

All shall be better than well.

But the Socialist is only a Utopian in that sense. He is a dreamer, as all whose eyes are lifted to the skies are dreamers. But he is not a Utopian in the sense of one having devised a plan for the reconstruction of society. Socialism is not a scheme, a detailed plan for the regeneration of society and the removal of all its ills. It is no political and economic cure-all, guaranteed to make a perfect society. The modern Socialist does not, and cannot, paint for you a picture of the future society, such as the many followers of Plato have imagined. It is useless, therefore, to ask him for specifications and plans of the Coöperative Commonwealth of which he so eloquently speaks. None but a visionary of the wildest type would believe it possible for the Socialist to do so.

Strangely enough, it is always your hard-

headed, practical man who regards Socialism as a scheme for building the Perfect State somewhere in the neighborhood of the Delectable Mountains, and who is disappointed when he finds that it is nothing of the kind. He comes with his questions concerning the future, and wants to know what will be done to insure perfect happiness. He asks for specifications of the future social state, and for a guarantee that perfection will be realized therein.

The Socialist, of course, makes the commonsense answer that he does not know when he is thus pressed for information concerning details of the society of the future. He assures his perplexed questioner that he does not think of the Coöperative Commonwealth as the Perfect State in which perfect happiness is at last realized. He knows that the world cannot be made to conform to the dream of the Heart's Desire. He indulges in no futile and vain hope that mankind can be made perfect and completely happy by any ingenious legislative devices. The splen-

did genius of Darwin, which was the crowning glory of the nineteenth century, opened up to mankind a new and inspiring view of the great drama of human progress. We know now that social changes are not made in response to our prayers; we know that every social change is brought about by gigantic evolutionary forces which our conscious will can only assist. The present social state is not the deliberate realization of some great inventor's designs, but the outcome of centuries of evolution, a long process of development in which steam and electricity and human aspiration have been mighty forces.

It is the Socialist, then, who most clearly realizes the futility of social schemes; who relies upon evolution for his hope, and knows that the future is being developed in the womb of the present. He, almost alone of men, realizes how vain is that wish of Omar the Pagan, which so many people entertain to-day, to shatter "this sorry scheme of things" to bits and then to "remold it nearer

to the Heart's Desire." While he contemplates with reverent admiration the faith of a Fourier, waiting patiently at noon every day for twelve years for the philanthropist with a million francs to secure the happiness of the world, the Socialist sees its pathos, not in the fact that the philanthropist Fourier expected never came, but in the futility of the hope that the world's happiness could be secured by any such method if he came. And when he thinks of the saintly Robert Owen, disappointed that the British Parliament put off the consideration of his Utopia for a session, crying out, "What! postpone the happiness of the whole human race to the next session?" the Socialist has only reverence for the great dreamer's faith and singleness of purpose, mingled with pity for his blindness to the laws of human progress.

Most persons are somewhat startled when they hear some Socialist agitator say, or read in a Socialist book or paper, that Socialism is not at all a Utopian scheme; that it is not a design for the destruction of all the insti-

tutions so painfully evolved through the uncounted years of human struggle, and the building of a new social edifice upon the ruins of the old. They are astonished to learn that the Socialist does not delude himself into the belief that, as a result of the inspiration of an Owen or a Marx, laws will be enacted which will make earth a Paradise, subdue all evil human passions, and make men gods. "But will there not always be some to fail to make the most of life and waste its opportunities?" asks the simple-minded person of this type. "Quite probably so," replies the mildly amused Socialist, "but pray what has that to do with the claim that at least all should be given equal opportunities?"

"But don't you think that some men and women will rise above the rest, in any sort of social state?" asks the amiable simple-minded person whose concept of Socialism is that it is a beautiful scheme for abolishing evil from the world, to be astonished by the reply, "Certainly: it would be very unfortu-

nate if it were otherwise. But pray what has that to do with the matter? Is that a good reason why some should be weighted down with leaden disadvantages, so that they cannot rise?"

Socialism is an expression of faith in man. It is a theory of social progress according to which each stage in the social ascent from brute to brother and from bondage to freedom is made possible only through the extension of man's kingdom in the universe, his mastery over the forces of external nature. The social state which it hails with so much rapturous faith is only a new stage in the upward march of the race, a new epoch of civilization, made possible and inevitable by the great economic forces which man has developed, and which in turn compel him to march on to still loftier heights.

Such being the case, it is as irrational to demand of the Socialist answers to the multitudinous questions concerning matters of detail which are so easily propounded as it would have been to propound such questions

to a fourteenth century man concerning the social system which he saw developing out of feudalism. One has only need to imagine oneself living in that far-off time of transition, fully conscious of the impending rise of a new social and economic order, and proclaiming that consciousness fearlessly and constantly in the face of ridicule and sneering skepticism, to realize something like the position of the modern Socialist heralding the rise of a new social order. Imagine the skeptics of that period of transition from feudalism to capitalism taunting the man who proclaimed the coming of a new order out of the womb of the old because he could not tell exactly how all the details of the new society would be arranged! At most the prophet would be able to tell only the great fundamental economic outlines, more or less clearly evident to the discerning eye: to demand more would be the most foolish of Utopian follies.

And so it is with the Socialist of to-day. He believes that he can discern the main

outlines of the economic basis of a new social order growing out of the present. That outline he is prepared to trace as well as he is able. But you must not ask him to tell you what women will wear in the Coöperative Commonwealth, how it will be decided who shall live on the corner lot, nor how the government will prevent the accumulation of antique snuff boxes and grandfather clocks by individuals of highly developed acquisitiveness. If he were a Utopian of the old school, advocating the reconstruction of society according to some carefully wrought design, he would be able to answer all such questions with precision. But he is just an ordinary mortal like yourself, calling attention to the signs of social growth.

II

YOUR hard-headed man of "practical" sense is opposed to Socialism because he believes that it is contemplated to make all people equal. A multitude of advisers assure him that this is so. The most loquacious — and omniscient — President the nation ever had assured him that Socialism meant nothing less than the reduction of all human beings to one dead level of mediocrity. But the Socialist answers that Socialism does not concern itself with equality at all. He knows very well that there can never be equality of gift, of character, or of attainment. As some will be bigger of body than their fellows, so some will always be bigger of mind and soul. The vision of a world of perfect equality is like the quest for the Philosopher's Stone and the Elixir of Perpetual

Youth. It is, fortunately, an illusive and unattainable ideal.

Nature's law is inequality. Mountain and valley and plain in the physical world have their counterparts in human nature. No Socialist believes that the diversities of human capacity and attainment will be swept away, that there will ever be uniformity of intellectual or spiritual attainment. When the Socialist's ideal of a Coöperative Commonwealth is attained there will still be mountains of genius rising above the plain of life, mountains of higher altitudes and more numerous than at present. It is to-day that genius is repressed: the "dull level of life" is a present reality.

The only equality which Socialists hope to see realized in the world is that divine equality which cannot be denied without denying liberty and brotherhood at the same time — equality of opportunity. The protest of modern Socialism is not directed against Nature's inequalities, which give us the "hewers of wood and drawers of water" upon the

one hand and the genius of a Shakespeare, a Darwin, or an Edison upon the other. It is directed solely against those artificial, man-made inequalities which bind chains upon the souls of men, stifle genius in the hideous quagmire of poverty and despair, and exalt a few upon thrones of privileges — thrones that are founded upon the prostrate and bound forms of the oppressed.

While it is true that not all the flowers in Life's garden will be alike, equal in beauty of color or fragrance, it is not the less true that every one of them must have an equal chance to blossom and grow before we can speak of justice as an accomplished fact. And the world will not be a fit place for a human child, nor worthy of man's highest aspiration, until every human blossom has equal care and opportunity to grow. Not until the economic conditions of life make it possible for every child born into the world to attain the fullest possible development of its powers will it be right for us to rest content and satisfied.

Economic conditions are far more important than the world's moralists have recognized, for they are the soil in which the roots of life and character grow, and from which they draw the sustaining forces which alone make possible free blossoming and perfect fruitage. Life attains a generous height and a perfect texture only when its roots are nurtured in the soil of nourishing economic conditions. What we want, then, in the interest of society as well as that of the individual, is equal economic opportunities for all. And until that end has been attained, so long as the foul, dank tenement casts its black shadow over our cities, and the pinched and wan faces of hungry children haunt our streets, the song of brotherhood will be unsung, a prophecy, not a reality of life. And so long will our streets and market places abound with broken and depraved human figures, driftwood and waste of the great human struggle, doomed figures, disinherited of man's divine estate. This claim for equality of opportunity as the right of every child

is incontestable and unanswerable. Upon it alone can justice rest firm and unshaken; from it alone can true freedom spring. It is the rationale of the Socialism that is challenging the age in which we live.

III

SOCIALISM is most grievously misunderstood and misinterpreted when it is believed to be opposed to private property. Socialism and private property are not antithetical. The common ownership of everything, which so many good people still believe to be involved in the Socialist programme, has, in fact, nothing to do with it. Such communistic ideas belong to the ancient Utopias of Plato, of the early Christian Fathers, of More and Fourier and Owen. The modern Socialist ideal bears very slight resemblance to these ancient ideals with their violent hatred of private property. The American Socialist of to-day is much nearer to Aristotle's belief in the maintenance of private property, and its approximate equalization, than to Plato's belief in the abolition of all private property.

In a certain sense, the whole history of

human civilization may be said to be the record of man's struggle with this question of property, his attempt rightly to relate himself to things. Every great epoch in history has been born out of a conflict concerning property rights. The modern struggle of woman for the right of suffrage is but the aftermath of her emancipation from the *status* of a chattel. When the primitive man went out to hunt a wife, he went armed, but not with bon bons, opera tickets and flowers, as the twentieth century man goes. Instead, he armed himself with a big stick or stone. Catching the lady of his choice, he rendered her unconscious, dragged her to his home, and she became his property. The Council of Bishops at Macon, in the sixth century, disputing as to whether woman had a soul, and the legislators in twentieth century America disputing her right to the franchise, remind us of the old notion that woman was properly a chattel.

When the State decreed that human beings of a certain race were properly to be regarded

as chattels, and property in human bodies and souls was legalized by the statutes, the first challenge to that idea came with a shock to the great mass of the people. Boston mobbed her brave Garrison, and Concord stoned the gentle Whittier. Why? Because it was charged that the Abolitionists were seeking to destroy private property. Had they been charged with attempting to destroy religion, morality, art, or anything else they would not have experienced such violence, but an attack upon private property inevitably brought down upon their heads the wrath of an enraged property-holding and property-worshiping class. When they were accused of the monstrous crime of seeking to destroy private property, the enemies of the iniquitous system of chattel slavery made the reply which the Socialists are repeating to-day. "We are not opposed to private property, but only to certain hideous forms of it." Their declaration, which the immortal Lincoln so superbly voiced, was that they had no sort of objection to the

ownership of things, but that they would not rest until they had destroyed the ownership of men and women.

In the fierce heat of war, at a price which still saddens and staggers the mind, the nation established the principle that no man was good enough or great enough to be the master of another's life. To-day the nation is being called upon by the Socialist to face a new challenge, which must be met and answered by the heart and brain of the American people. The Socialist believes that he is carrying the banner which Lincoln bore, taking it from where the cold hand of Lincoln laid it down and bearing it to where he would bear it were he alive to-day. Socialism carries the eternal issue onward. As Lincoln thundered that no man was good enough to own another's life, so the Socialist agitator of our time is thundering the new form of the old principle, saying that no man is good enough to own the things upon which another's life depends. To declare men

free, to burn the parchments which declare them to be bound and chattels, is not really to set them free. No man is really free whose life is controlled by another, who depends upon some other man for the right to earn his bread in the sweat of his brow.

This, then, is the challenge of Socialism: No man is good enough to be master of another man's bread, of another man's job, of another man's life. The three things mean the same in the last analysis, for whoever is master of a man's bread, of his opportunities to labor, is master of his life as surely as if he owned a parchment testifying to the fact that he bought the man at auction. The breadmakers of the world must be empowered to eat the bread their hands make; the means of making bread must be taken from the hands of those who through them hold their fellows in bondage, and made common and free to all.

So modern Socialism denies no property right other than that which gives man do-

minion over his fellows. The farmer working his farm and maintaining himself and his family in comfort does not by that labor bind chains upon his fellow men and upon the children that are unborn. Not private property, but those anti-social forms of it which have been developed, and which give a ruling economic class the power to exploit the labor and needs of the toiling masses Socialism opposes and seeks to bring under democratic social control.

Whoever otherwise represents the Socialist programme misrepresents it. To claim, as some do, that this is an emasculated statement of the Socialist aim, for the purposes of a deceptive propaganda, is disingenuous and untrue. Marx and Engels, the great founders of modern scientific Socialism, took precisely the same ground in their famous *Communist Manifesto,* more than sixty years ago, as reference to that great document will show. They made it perfectly clear that they opposed only that capitalistic form of private property which made it possible for

a class of property owners to exploit the wealth producers; that private property of a few which makes private property for the many impossible.

IV.

THAT is why the struggle is one of classes, and why we hear so much in connection with the Socialist propaganda of the " class struggle " and of " class consciousness." When Mr. Roosevelt was President, like a habitual scold, he hurled his wrathful bolts at the Socialists for preaching this doctrine of class consciousness. He seemed to think that the Socialists make the class struggle of which they talk so much, and, like a great many other people, to imagine that the wicked Socialists exist by provoking class hatred.

But the struggle of the classes about which the Socialist has so much to say is not produced by agitation. It is not in response to the stirring appeals of agitators that classes are formed in a nation and come into conflict. The development of our economic system to

a point where the control of practically all the resources of the nation resides in a few hands, forcing these, whether they desire it or not, to dominate our politics, creates an oligarchy and divides the nation into warring classes. When the wealth and resources of a nation become the property of a minority, that minority inevitably becomes the ruling class, and, inevitably also, the subject class will find itself compelled to antagonize it.

The class struggle is therefore not an artificial revolt that is created and fostered by agitation, but a natural and necessary outcome of our economic development. Just as we may say that all history is the record of man's struggles to place property in its right relation to life, so we may say that it is the record of class struggles. Progress has always taken the form of class struggles; each epoch in civilization has been ushered in by the triumph of a new class over an old one. Frankly, the Socialist movement is and must be a class movement. That is to say, its immediate object must be to secure the triumph

of the wage-working class over the class of exploiters. In no other way can the present system with its exploitation of the worker by the capitalist, and its riot of wealth won only by plunging multitudes into the abysses of poverty, ever be brought to an end.

This does not mean, however, that only the manual workers are wronged, and that they alone are interested in bringing about better conditions. Still less does it mean that none but the exploited may join in the political Socialist movement. What is meant is simply this: There can be no solution of the great social problem which does not destroy the power of the exploiting class and liberate the exploited class. To that purpose all who would joins hands with the Socialists must pledge themselves, and it is natural that the workers should have a keener interest in the fulfillment of this purpose than their exploiters.

Although they are often represented as desiring simply to change one ruling class for another, the Socialists are clear-sighted

enough to see that, in the long run, not much would be gained by that. If it were the aim of this great world movement of labor simply to change the respective places of the warring classes, the masters of to-day becoming the slaves of to-morrow, not much would be accomplished. Society would still be divided into warring classes; there would still be lords of bread and slaves of bread, exploiters and exploited. No. The aim of this world-circling Socialist movement is to do away with class rule altogether, not merely to change masters. The workers are in this position: they cannot overthrow the rule of the exploiting class without destroying the only basis upon which class rule can rest, and, at the same time, creating the only possible economic basis for the life of brotherhood. Class struggles first began when private property in the means of the social life appeared, and one man could say of the conditions essential to another's life, "These are subject to my will and law." Class struggles will end forever when the means of the common

life are made subject to the common good and will; social property, owned and managed for the common weal and joy. The Socialist movement does not exist for the purpose of fostering class hatred: it is aiming to destroy the conditions which give rise to classes and produce class antagonisms and hatreds. This pacific purpose is very different from that commonly ascribed to the Socialists by their critics.

V

BUT, it may be argued, all the Socialist theories seem plausible enough when they are carefully and calmly stated, but there is one thing which the Socialists do not take into account — they overlook human nature! Selfishness and envy are inherent in the nature of man, we are told, and it is feared that the Socialist thinks of human nature as being pure gold without any alloy. This is an old and hoary objection which every Socialist has to encounter.

The Socialist replies to this objection by insisting that in truth it is the opponents of Socialism who fail to reckon properly with human nature, that the Socialist alone bases all his hope and his efforts upon what is known of human nature. That, broadly and briefly stated, is the claim which must be made here on behalf of the Socialist movement. The

very terms in which the average man speaks of human nature betray the fact that he has never seriously thought about it; never asked himself what human nature is. He repeats, parrot-like, an objection which he has heard somewhere, with as little thought as a parrot gives to the things it has been taught to say, and with as little comprehension.

What is meant by "human nature" when it is described as being an insuperable obstacle to Socialism? Is it not a fact that those who urge this objection think of human nature as something fixed and unchanging, some stable ingredient, some inflexible principle, which enters into the composition of every normal human being? It is very evident from the manner in which the objection is urged that most of those who urge it have in their minds, perhaps not clearly or definitely formulated as yet, a conception of human nature as being a sort of parcel of various assorted qualities, a composite of certain vices and virtues, more or less evenly blended, which enters into the mental and

moral make-up of the average human being.

But in truth human nature is always changing. Progress implies some change or modification of human nature. Not only is there not at any time a common standard of intellectual or moral development which justifies us in talking of human nature in general, but changes of time and place involve such changes of conduct and of mental attitude that to call attention to the fact ought to be enough to dispose of this stupid old objection.

Every great calamity reported in the press provides its own illustration of the fact that there is no very definite meaning to be attached to the term "human nature" which we so freely use. A great disaster occurs at sea, for example, and there is a panic-stricken rush for the boats. Some men in their frenzy trample down women and children: they are mastered by the primitive instinct of self-preservation. That is human nature. But some other men hold them back and protect the women, helping these first into the boats.

They are mastered by a force that conquers the primitive human instinct, a sentiment, a convention of society, a tradition of the race. That, too, is human nature.

The primitive savage afraid of fire, and the civilized man using it, both illustrate human nature in different stages of its development. The modern man, using the ocean to bear his burdens and making a pathway of the skies, and his remote ancestor, afraid of the ocean and regarding the sky as an awful mystery, illustrate human nature in different stages of its evolution; their conduct reflects the sum of their knowledge and experience. Human nature is exemplified by the blind, helpless terror of the savage in Africa in the presence of the dread sleeping sickness, but another phase of human nature is exemplified by the great scientist, Koch, going into the centers of pestilence and death and proving himself more powerful than the natives' gods. The terrified savage, mutilating his poor body in the hope that he may appease his angry gods, and the scientist, seeking the

germ of the disease, draining swamps and patiently developing a remedy for it, illustrate human nature as a great and constantly changing expression of human consciousness.

Of course, there is a law of life and development which expresses itself in what is so vaguely termed human nature. Man is a creature of his environment, and self-preservation, self-realization, self-expression, are fundamental instincts which determine his conduct, his actions in any given environment. Socialism is not an artificial attempt to substitute some other law for this. It is not an attempt, as so many suppose, to substitute altruistic motives for those of self-interest which spring from the fundamental law of life. Quite the contrary is true, in fact. The whole theory of modern Socialism, and its appeal to the workers, rest upon the law of self-preservation. Self-abnegation is not Socialism: rather it should be defined as enlightened self-interest.

That this is so can easily be shown. Here are two classes in modern society opposed

to each other. One class is small, but exceedingly powerful. Despite its disadvantage in size, it is the ruling class, controlling and exploiting the larger class. Its members rule by reason of the fact that they have developed a sense of class solidarity as a result of their ownership of the means of life. Now, the workers are developing a class instinct, a sense of class solidarity, as a necessary result of their economic experience and position. There is no escaping the fact: The deepest and profoundest instinct in human beings is that they are forever striving to secure more of good in return for less of ill. That instinct made man kindle his first fire; it inspired the building of the first canoe; it has inspired every invention and every revolution in the world's history. Socialism rests all its faith upon that deep, primal human instinct. Instead of saying that Socialism requires a change in human nature it would be fair to say that human nature makes inevitable the change for which the Socialists are working.

If the meaning of this is not quite clear, consider the matter further in these terms: Demos, the people, long ago described by Tomasso Campanella as "a beast of muddy brain," is developing a clear mental vision. No longer muddy-brained, but keen and alert, Demos is learning that poverty is unnecessary, that there is plenty for all, and that none need suffer want; that it is possible to suffer less and live more, to have more of good while enduring less of ill. That Demos should reach out to that larger life with eager grasp, and turn toward the future — the future of Socialism — is not a strange thing. It is nothing less than obedience to Nature's primal law, the law that has governed the world since the first man gazed with wonder at the stars above him.

No attempt to make a plain, commonsense statement of the principles of the Socialism of to-day, and the hope which inspires its adherents, can satisfy if it ignores the matter of their relation to the institution of the family based upon monogamic marriage. Among

all the heritages of Socialism from the Utopian experiments of the past none has been the source of greater trouble than the idea that marriage and the family must be done away with. Plato's *Republic* made the communism of property complete by the communism of women, and just as there are many people who think that the Socialists hold Plato's communistic ideal regarding property, so, too, they think the Socialists must hold the ideal of communism of wives.

Let it be said, then, with all possible emphasis, that modern Socialism has nothing in common with those schemes for placing family life upon a new basis which are generally grouped under the euphonious designation, "Free Love." A few closet philosophers, both within and without the Socialist movement, may indulge in such fantastic dreams, but the great mass of the Socialists of the world are no more concerned with them than the great mass of people outside the Socialist ranks. Whoever charges the Socialists of America with harboring designs

for the destruction of the family based upon monogamic marriage, branding them as "Free Lovers," deserves to be ostracized by all right-thinking men and women who love and cherish the Republic, quite regardless of party, for such persons endanger the safety and stability of the nation itself by appealing to prejudice and base passion in the discussion of a great national issue. There is no worse treason than that, and it is to be hoped that the day is not far distant when, whosoever makes that charge, be his station high or low, will be denounced by all thoughtful citizens as an enemy of the Republic more to be feared than a host of Benedict Arnolds.

It is true that almost all the Utopia builders, from Plato to the entertaining and ingenious Mr. Wells, have felt it incumbent upon themselves to design new forms for the family relation. Some, like Plato, have insisted that monogamous marriage must be destroyed and communism of wives established. Others, like Mr. Wells, have insisted upon retaining monogamous marriage and supple-

menting it with some system of state supervision, applying the principles of the stud farm to the propagation of the race. These visionaries with their systems of eugenics and stirpiculture, and their dreams of the Superman, are found both within and without the Socialist movement. But if you would take the common sense view of the matter you must recognize that the Socialist movement, as such, is no more responsible for these individual views and fads than for the fact that some of its members are vegetarians, anti-vaccinationists, anti-vivisectionists, or devotees of any of the multitude of reform cults to which men and women attach importance. You must judge the Socialist movement, like any other, by its mass; by the common aims which inspire the movement as a whole, not by individual caprices or idiosyncracies which manifest themselves among Socialists as among all masses of people.

The idea that Socialism must of necessity involve some artificial change of the institution of the family was born of man's miscon-

ception of the laws of population. The grim specter of over-population with which Malthus frightened the first half of the last century has never wholly disappeared from the mental horizon. Men took the fears of Malthus and made of them a dogma. "If you make life too easy," it was argued, "removing famine and pestilence, and the fear of famine in particular, then there will result an unrestricted propagation of the race; population will overrun the means of subsistence." With this dogma as the foundation of their thought, they naturally concluded that a necessary condition of Socialism must be the control of the propagation of the species by the State, in some form or another.

But we know now that the old dogma was false. We know that the true law of population, among human beings at least, is not what Malthus thought, but that population tends to abnormal and unsafe increase where there is most poverty and hardship, where the struggle for existence is fiercest. There is

never any fear of "race suicide" in the slums, as we know. The parents who are ill-nourished and hunger-menaced and overworked breed most rapidly. Adam Smith pointed out that in his *Wealth of Nations* more than a century ago, but we are only now coming to a full realization of its wonderful truth. Nature is forever struggling against extinction, and where life is hardest her most titanic energies are put forth. That is the explanation of the abnormal fecundity of consumptives with which scientists have so long been familiar. It is among the well-to-do classes that the decline of the birth-rate is most marked, not among the poor; "race suicide" is a problem, not in the poorest countries, but in the most prosperous.

But the great problem, after all, is not the Rooseveltian problem of race suicide. Rather, it is a problem of race homicide. What ought most to alarm us is not a low birth-rate, but a high death-rate. Our ideal ought not to be a tragic race between the birth-rate and the death-rate, motherhood

given over to the twin agonies of bearing and burying babies. Given fair economic conditions, there need be no fear, either that Nature will fail to maintain the existence of the race or that population will over-run the means of subsistence. It is beyond conjecture that in a single state, say Texas, we could grow food enough to feed many millions of people more than now inhabit the whole of the United States: the fear of population outrunning the means of subsistence is as remote as the fear that we shall be crowded out by the multiplication of humming birds. We need but divert a thousandth part of the land and labor-power now employed in producing the means of destruction to the task of producing the means of life in order to make the whole world glad with fatness and plenty.

It requires only a very brief and rapid survey of the question from this point of view to show the futility of all the schemes, ancient and modern, for suppressing marriage and the family as a condition of social well-being. All the so-called "Free Love"

schemes that have been devised with that end in view have their *raison d' etre* in a false concept of the laws of population.

Socialism, then, involves neither "Free Love" nor the application of the principles of the stud farm to the family. So much may be asserted without expressing any condemnation of any of the systems of eugenics and stirpiculture that have been propounded: these can be considered upon their merits, all that concerns us here and now being the fact that they are not involved in the Socialist programme.

Yet it would not be wholly true to say that Socialism has nothing to do with the family, for indeed it is to be devoutly hoped that it will greatly influence family life for good, exalting it to a higher plane than it has ever reached hitherto. It is not vain to hope that a satisfactory readjustment of our economic conditions will result in the repression of those evils which most menace family life today. It is not unreasonable to suppose, as all Socialists do, that given equality of eco-

nomic opportunity to all with privilege to none, which is the whole aim of Socialism, no woman would bind herself to loveless wedlock merely for the sake of a "home," as in our hearts we know millions of women must do to-day. Nor would women sell themselves body and soul for coronets and titles, for wealth and social position — a form of prostitution under the cloak of marriage common enough to-day — prostitution which no altar can sanctify, infinitely more serious and shameful than the prostitution which flaunts its painted forms upon our pavements, or lurks within the shadows of brothels.

VII

IN this brief summary of the hope of most present day Socialists we have kept very close to the material things of practical life which peculiarly belong to the rule of that practical judgment based upon conscious experience which men call " common sense." It would not, however, be fair or just to conclude without some reference, however brief, to that vision of Socialism which is so dear to many thousands of Socialists in all lands, which cannot be confined within the metes and bounds of these material things. Beyond these things, beyond the mere physical life, deeper in its roots and higher in its reach, is that life of the spirit which we vaguely sense, but feel to be the noblest end of man's being. Though we have ceased to regard the story of God making a form of clay and then breathing into its nostrils the Breath of

Life and calling it a "Living Soul" as a literal fact, it has not ceased to have its value for us. We can still regard it as a splendid symbol, for there is in each human being that which transcends the physical life, a life of the spirit.

So, to many thousands of earnest Socialists in all lands, Socialism means something more than an economic readjustment; something that is infinitely vaster and more glorious than mere material gain. The economic programme of the Socialist movement, making the despoiled and disinherited of earth masters of the State, and bringing under common control all the means of the common life, is not to be taken as the end, the final goal, of the Socialist movement. It is at best but a means to an end: we seek the liberation of man's physical life, not as those who go forth to harvest, but as those who go forth to prepare the soil. We want economic freedom as the only means whereby spiritual freedom can be secured. We want to open the prison gates of poverty and oppression

that the soul of man may be set free. When we beckon our fellows to join us in our efforts to establish economic justice and security it is with full faith that only in the land of economic freedom will the Temple of Human Brotherhood ever be found, and the song of Fellowship be heard.

II

PRIVATE PROPERTY AND PERSONAL LIBERTY IN THE SOCIALIST STATE

I

THE most persistent and wide-spread antagonism toward Socialism springs from a belief that, under a Socialist régime, private property in all its forms would be destroyed and personal liberty made impossible by the rule of an immense bureaucratic government. All other objections, it may be said without denying their force, are subordinate to these two.

The modern Socialist, whether dogmatic Marxist or neo-Marxist, indignantly denies both charges contained in this criticism. The greater its persistence, the greater his vehemence. Not unreasonably, he claims the right to define the Socialist ideal in which he believes and to interpret it in his own way: he refuses to accept the *dicta* of the enemies of Socialism as to its meaning. But, in spite of indignant denials, the criticism prevails.

For the almost universal prevalence of this criticism there must be some other reason than malice on the part of the critics. Underlying the seeming malevolence there is always a very real belief in the disaster to the institutions of private property and personal liberty which must attend the triumph of Socialism. Instead of hatred creating the belief that a Socialist régime is incompatible with personal freedom and with private property, the belief, deep-seated and sincere, however mistaken it may prove to be, creates the hatred. It must be remembered, also, that the belief is not confined to the malevolent opponents of Socialism and Socialist aims. Many who are very sympathetic toward the movement and the ideal, a great army of the "almost persuaded," are held back from giving their adherence to the movement through fear that the criticism is well founded.

The existence of such a widely prevalent belief must be the result of causes inherent either in the principles of Socialism or in the

history of the movements based upon those principles. It is, therefore, only just that the Socialist, when he makes his sweeping denial that Socialism involves the suppression of private property and personal liberty, should be asked to explain the persistence of the fear he declares to be groundless — and this only as a prelude to an equally just demand for a reasoned statement of his own faith, so different to the unfaith of the world.

The frank and sincere Socialist will be slow to attribute the criticism to malice. He will, on the contrary, be disposed to admit that it is a perfectly natural result of certain phases of the evolution of Socialism and the development of its propaganda. He will admit, with entire good faith, that Socialists have given their opponents ample warrant for believing that with the coming of Socialism private property and personal liberty must cease. No small part of the work of the Socialists of to-day consists in undoing the work of an older generation of Socialists.

Proudhon's famous dictum, " Property is

robbery," and its counterpart, "Property-holders are thieves," have been so many times reiterated by Socialists, and so often inscribed upon their banners, that no sort of blame attaches to those persons who, taking the words at their face-value in the currency of human speech, have concluded that Socialism must abolish all kinds of private property. Phrases like "the socialization of property" abound in the literature of Socialism, and in more than a few Socialist programmes, issued in this country and elsewhere, Socialism is objectively defined as "the social ownership and control of all the means of production, distribution and exchange." The definition certainly justifies the belief that the existence of a Socialist state depends upon the abolition of private property.

II

TAKING the definition literally, it is evident that under Socialism nothing which could be used as a means of producing or distributing wealth could be privately owned. No man could own a spade, a hammer or even a jack-knife, for these are all instruments of production. No woman could own a sewing-machine, or even a needle, for these are tools, means of production. No man could own a wheelbarrow, no woman could own a market-basket, these being "means of distribution." The differences between a spade and a steam-plough, between a market-basket and a delivery van, are differences in the degree of their efficiency merely.

Now, it is quite evident that, if we are to accept this definition literally and to regard "the social ownership and control of *all* the

means of production, distribution and exchange," as a *sine qua non* of Socialism, we must accept the verdict that it would destroy the institutions of personal property and liberty. The amount of property which would not come within the scope of the classification, "all means of production, distribution and exchange," is almost a negligible quantity, and it is certain that such a vast bureaucratic system of government would be needed as would practically extinguish personal liberty. It requires little imagination to see how intolerable the despotism would be if needles, spades, sewing-machines and market-baskets were to be under the control of governmental bureaus.

But, when challenged upon this important matter, the modern Socialist denies that the social ownership and control of *all* the agencies of production and distribution is a *sine qua non* of Socialism. He denies that his aim is anything of the kind. Socialism, he says, implies the social ownership and control

only of certain kinds of property, certain very definite categories of productive and distributive agencies. Under Socialism, as he conceives it, private property would coexist with social property. Indeed, his claim is that Socialism, in very important respects, would extend both private property and personal liberty.

Therefore, the question arises: What things, under Socialism, will it be necessary to socialize and what to leave in the hands of private owners?

The reply to this question may take either of two forms: either we may attempt to catalogue the things which would have to be socialized in order to realize Socialism — a stupendous task — or we may attempt to state the principle of differentiation in a manner permitting its ready application to any form of property, at any time, and in any place. This latter is, indeed, the only practical method of dealing with the question. Not only is the former method a cumbersome one, in-

volving the gigantic task of making an inventory of all kinds of property, but endless revision of the list would be necessary to make it conform to changing conditions and to the needs of particular localities.

III

PRELIMINARY to the attempt to state the principles of differentiation, however, a brief discussion of the nature of property seems to be necessary. If we ask ourselves, What is Property? and, instead of repeating Proudhon's classic epigrammatic reply, attempt to answer the question with the seriousness it demands, we shall soon discover that much of what we have regarded as a concrete entity is, in fact, a mere abstraction: that property is not a tangible thing, in a vast number of instances, but an assumed relation. We shall discover, too, that there are no absolute property rights anywhere.

While it is true that the recognition of private property marks the emergence of mankind from savagery, and that civilization is commonly said to rest upon that recognition, the paradox is nevertheless true that civiliza-

tion and private property, in an absolute sense, are incompatible. The jurisprudence of all civilized countries rests upon the repudiation of absolute property rights of any kind whatever. Taxation is, of course, a familiar example of the collective disregard of private property rights. All kinds of property have been subjected to taxation, the collective authority exercising the right to take any part of any man's property, or even the whole of it. Henry George's proposal to impose a tax upon land values equal to the sum total of such values is a perfectly logical extension of the principle of taxation. A few years ago, the city council of Copenhagen, Denmark, applied the method to the street railways of that city with entire success, so that the owning companies were glad to surrender the lines.

The powers of domain and ultimate ownership which underlie the jurisprudence of every civilized nation prove conclusively that there is no allodial property in land, nor any form of absolute private property. A state

or municipality desires land which is the "property" of one of its citizens for some public purpose, such as building a hospital or a bridge, making a park or a roadway. The "owner" of the land does not agree to sell it, whereupon the state or the municipality takes the land from him — often at its own valuation! Even when the land is needed by a quasi-private corporation, such as a railway company, the collective power is used to take away the ownership of the land from one citizen and transfer it to others.

It is very commonly assumed that this power of ultimate ownership resting in society, through its government, applies only to land; but, in fact, no form of property is exempt from it. Not only may all forms of property be taxed, but likewise all forms of property may be sequestrated. The power exercised in times of martial law, of seizing food and other supplies, is an example of this. Under the police powers of all civilized communities, in case of serious accident or disaster, the home of any person, and anything

it contains, may be lawfully seized and used. Suppose that, during the San Francisco earthquake and fire, the "owner" of a supply of food or drugs, or any other vital necessity, should have clung to them, asserting his "ownership," does any sane person believe that he would have been permitted to enforce his sacred "rights" against the need of the community? Nothing, not even one's pocket-handkerchief, can be said to be exempt from this ultimate power of society. If, therefore, one's handkerchief is not taken away from him, it is simply because the community does not desire to take it. In the last analysis, private property is an abstraction. It consists of nothing more than a relation between the community and the citizen, and rests upon nothing more tangible than community good-will.

Furthermore, in the development of capitalist society the *substance* of private property tends to disappear, quite irrespective of the enforcement of the ultimate powers of owner-

ship by society. Prior to the formation of joint-stock companies, in the era of individual capitals, the investor who invested his money in a ship or a factory could say that the ship or the factory belonged to him. But with the coming of the joint-stock company and the development of the great industrial corporations, that could not be said. Suppose X to be a shareholder in a corporation which owns a cotton-mill. There are a thousand shareholders owning between them the ten thousand shares of stock of the corporation. X owns ten shares. But he does not own a one-thousandth part of the physical properties of the cotton-mill in any real sense. He could not, for instance, go into the mill and say: "Here are a thousand looms: one belongs to me. I will take it away."

What X really owns is a one-thousandth part of every brick in the building, not a single whole brick; a one-thousandth part of each cog in every machine, but not a single whole wheel; a one-thousandth part of every

yard of cotton, but not a single yard of actual cotton. X could not realize his own property, separate it from that of the other nine-hundred and ninety-nine shareholders and do as he pleased with it. To get at his one-thousandth part of a brick, he must destroy the whole brick. To actually realize his own property as a physical entity, he must destroy it and the property of his fellows. And then, paradoxically (for the whole capitalist system is a paradox), he does not realize it at all. When he has destroyed the brick and extracted his one-thousandth part of it, he does not own a one-thousandth part of a brick, but only some fragments of burned clay.

However we look at it, private property under our present social system is an abstraction. The property of the citizen in the immense assets of the State of New York, or of the United States, is just as real as the property of the shareholder in the United States Steel Corporation. But there is this important difference, that the citizen's share

is not negotiable; it may not be transferred. It cannot be gambled with in the market, whereas that of the shareholder in the corporation may be and commonly is.

IV

COLLECTIVE ownership is not the ultimate, fundamental condition of Socialism. It is proposed only as a means to an end, not as an end in itself. And that end, to the attainment of which collective ownership is the means, is the fundamental condition of Socialism. The central idea of modern Socialism, its spirit, is the doctrine of the division of society into antagonistic classes. The producers of wealth are exploited by a class of capitalists draining from them a "surplus value," and, instinctively, they struggle against the exploitation, to reduce the amount of the surplus value taken by the capitalists to a minimum — ultimately to zero. To do away with that exploitation, to destroy the power of one class to live upon the labors of another class, is the Socialist aim. Social ownership and control are only proposed

as means to the attainment of that end. If other means toward that end, quicker, more efficient or more certain means, can be found, there is nothing in Socialism to prevent their adoption.

It follows, therefore, that to make collective property of things not used to exploit labor does not, *necessarily,* form part of the Socialist programme. It is easy to see that, according to this principle of differentiation, it would be necessary to socialize the railroads, but not at all necessary to socialize a wheelbarrow. It is not difficult to see that a woman might support herself through the possession of a sewing-machine who would otherwise be obliged to submit to exploitation as a factory worker. To secure her the ownership of the machine would, therefore, be no departure from Socialist principles. On the contrary, in her individual case, the aims of the Socialist would be realized in that she would be placed beyond the power of the exploiter of labor. Similarly, in the case of the farmer with a small farm, and of

the craftsman with his own tools, or of groups of workers working co-operatively, there is no exploitation; no surplus value is extracted from their labor by any outside parties. Consequently, being neither exploited nor exploiters, their independent self-employment is quite consistent with Socialism.

As the Socialist movement has outgrown the influence of the early Utopians, which touched even Marx and Engels, it has given up the old notions of a regimentation of labor under the direction of the State. It is increasingly evident that the Socialists of today have abandoned the habit of speculating upon the practical application of their principles in future society. They are insisting more and more that Socialism be regarded as a principle — namely, the conscious elimination of the power of an idle class in society to exploit the wealth-producers. Whatever tends toward that end of eliminating the exploiter from society contributes to the fulfillment of the Socialist ideal.

Instead of the old contention that, in order to have Socialism, every petty industry must be destroyed by the power of great industrial corporations, and every small farm swallowed up by great bonanza farms of vast acreage, it is now recognized by most of the leading exponents of Socialism in this country and Europe that the small workshop and the small farm may enter very largely into the economic structure of the Socialist State. The small farm has thus far proved capable of more economical cultivation than farms of immense acreage; and it may be, as some authorities contend, that small workshops will prove quite as economical as, or even more economical than, great industries when the thousand hampering restrictions and discriminations and privileges which favor their greater rivals are removed.

Should this prove to be the case, there would be nothing to prevent a process of decentralization of industry taking place under Socialism; a process of decentralization so

far-reaching that private ownership and individual production would be much more diffused than now. The participation of the State in industry would be confined to the operation of railroads, mines and other great natural monopolies, and to the carrying on of the great fundamental public services which rest upon natural monopolies, leaving to individual enterprise and voluntary cooperation vastly more scope than these enjoy to-day in production and distribution. Needless to say, this is not a prophecy, but simply a statement of possibilities.

The important point to be remembered is that there is no principle of scientific Socialism which is opposed to the continuance of private property or private industrial enterprise, so that it involves no exploitation of the laborer by the non-laborer. It needs but the statement of this principle to demonstrate its truth. B is a farmer, working upon his own small farm. He exploits no man's labor, but manages to maintain himself and

family in comfort. C is a shoemaker, owning his own little shop and his own tools. He, also, exploits no man's labor, but manages to support himself and his family comfortably. What reason could the State have for forbidding these men to employ themselves, denying them the right to exchange their products, shoes for farm produce, and compelling them to enter industrial or agricultural regiments as employees of the State? *

* As the proofs of these pages are being revised there comes from the highest possible source interesting and emphatic confirmation of this position. By a referendum vote of the entire membership of the Socialist Party important changes have been made in its national platform. One clause in the platform demanded:

"The collective ownership of railroads, telegraphs, telephones, steamboat lines, and all other means of social transportation and communication, and all land."

By an overwhelming majority, the members of the Socialist Party decided to amend the platform by omitting the words "and all land." It was also decided to amend the statement of "General Principles" contained in the platform by inserting the following significant paragraph:

"There can be no absolute private title to land. All

Socialism, it cannot be too strongly emphasized, is not the fulfillment of a great plan of social organization, the principal feature of which is that the State owns and controls everything and aims to administer things with approximate equality of benefits and duties. It is an ideal, objectively considered, of a society in which there is no parasitic class preying upon the wealth-producers. Subjectively considered, it is a struggle on the part of the producers to throw off the exploiters, the parasites, in order that the ideal may be attained.

Of course, under Socialism, as in every

private titles, whether called fee simple or otherwise, are and must be subordinate to the public title. The Socialist Party strives to prevent land from being used for the purpose of exploitation and speculation. It demands the collective possession, control or management of land *to whatever extent may be necessary to attain that end. It is not opposed to the occupation and possession of land by those using it in a useful and bona fide manner without exploitation.*"

It can, I think, be fairly claimed that these amendments conclusively prove that the views advanced in these pages are thoroughly representative of the views of American Socialists generally.—J. S.

civilized society, private property of all kinds would be subject to the ultimate rule of society. The interests of society as a whole, that is to say, would be regarded as superior to those of the individual. Subject to this superior social right, there is no reason why private property should not be far more widespread under Socialism than to-day. Take, for example, the matter of homes. The great mass of the people do not own their own homes, though there can hardly be any question that the great mass of people desire to own homes of their own. It is conceivable that in a Socialist state of society every person who desired it could own a home for himself and family. On the other hand, it is not conceivable that the State would have any interest whatsoever in forbidding the ownership of homes. Since all families must have homes in which to live, whether provided by the State or otherwise, there could be no reason for the State's insisting upon being the universal landlord. Government ownership of dwellings in preference to the

ownership of the dwellings of the many by a few extortioners, certainly; but there is no more reason, so far as the central principle of Socialism is concerned, for denying the right of a man to own his home than there is to deny him the right to own his hat.

V

FROM the foregoing it will be seen that not only does Socialism not involve the abolition of all private property, but that, on the contrary, a wide extension of private property is quite compatible with Socialism as taught by Marx and his followers. It is not an insignificant thing that the Socialist party of the United States, in its national platform of 1904, charged that "Capitalism is the enemy and destroyer of essential private property." The Socialist protest against capitalism is that it destroys the economic independence of the producers. The restoration of that independence is the grand aim of all Socialist endeavor.

Failure to recognize with clearness the principle set forth in the foregoing pages produces inability to distinguish between Government ownership and Socialism. Many

persons marvel that the Socialists do not hail with gladness, and join forces with, the various movements aiming at public ownership as they arise, and thus achieve Socialism piecemeal. Every proposal to extend the area of Government ownership and management is at once hailed as a "step toward Socialism." For example, a strong movement arises for the Government ownership of interstate railroads, or the telegraph systems, and people wonder that the Socialists preserve their equanimity, stand aloof, apparently unconcerned, and decline to join the movement. Such persons confound — as many Socialists do — the external forms of the Socialist programme, its non-essentials, with its fundamental, essential principle. They do not see that the form of ownership is relatively unimportant according to the Socialist philosophy.

It is quite as possible for a Government to exploit the workers in the interests of a privileged class as it is for private individuals, or quasi-private corporations, to do so.

Germany with her state-owned railroads, or Austria-Hungary and Russia with their great Government monopolies, are not more Socialistic, but less so, than the United States, where these things are owned by individuals or corporations. The United States is nearer Socialism for the reason that its political institutions have developed farther toward pure democracy than those of the other countries named. True, in Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia and other countries of the Old World, there is a good deal of Government ownership, but the Governments are class Governments and the workers are exploited for the benefit of the ruling classes. Obviously, the workers are no better off as a result of changing the channel of exploitation merely, while the amount of exploitation is left unchanged. The real *motif* of Socialism is not merely to change the form of industrial organization and ownership, but to eliminate exploitation.

To sum up: the whole matter may be very briefly expressed in the form of a declaration

of principles, as follows: Socialism is not hostile to private property, except where such property is used to exploit the labor of others than its owners. The socialization of property in the Socialist State would be confined to (1) such things as in their nature could not be held by private owners without subjecting the community to exploitation or humiliation; (2) such things as the citizens might agree to own in common to attain superior efficiency in their management.

VI

GRANTED the foregoing conclusions, it is evident that the fear of a huge bureaucratic Government as an inevitable condition of Socialism loses its force. Such a bureaucracy might be created, it is true, but it would not result inevitably from the amount of administrative work involved in the management of all property and "all the means of production, distribution and exchange." In fact, there is no good reason for disbelieving the claim made by modern Socialists that the amount of Government control over the individual would be far less than we are now accustomed to.

In this connection it must be remembered that the regulation of capitalistic property in modern society, especially in the great social services — such as the railroads, lighting companies and the like — involves an enor-

mous amount of government which, under such a condition as that suggested as belonging to Socialism, would be wholly superfluous. When one thinks of the tremendous amount of legislative and administrative effort which experience, not theorizing, has shown to be requisite for the restraint of capitalist enterprise, the mind is staggered by the stupendous total. No one knows, for it has never been computed, how much it has cost the United States during the last ten years to "regulate" the railroads in their relations to the public. This much we do know — that it has been found necessary to enact an immense body of legislation for the regulation of capitalistic enterprise. To enact this legislation has cost an enormous sum of money; to enforce it has cost a great deal more in the way of maintaining an army of inspectors, judges and officials of one sort and another.

It has been said in criticism of the methods of conducting our public services that the

amount actually spent in doing the work is in many cases only a fraction of the total cost. To illustrate: the actual operation of a street railway, including the men who make the cars and lay the tracks, the men in the power-house, motormen and conductors, is said to represent less labor than what may be called the bookkeeping of the railway — the army of "spotters," inspectors, collectors, cashiers, clerks, bookkeepers, accountants and the like. Most of these workers are in reality parasites; their labor is only rendered necessary by the preying of private interests upon the body social.

Similarly, it may be said that much of our Government is in a like manner parasitic, rendered necessary only by the preying of private interests upon the body social. The socialization of all the natural monopolies and the restoration of economic independence to the great mass of the people would render obsolete an astonishingly large body of laws, many of them irritating and humiliating to a

degree that is oppressive, and would turn a large army of workers from parasitic to genuinely useful occupations.

Every abuse of capitalism calls forth a fresh installment of legislation restrictive of personal liberty, with an army of prying officials. Legislators keep busy making laws, judges keep busy interpreting and enforcing them, and a swarm of petty officials are kept busy attending to this intricate machine of popular government. In sober truth, it must be said that capitalism has created, and could not exist without, the very bureaucracy it charges Socialism with attempting to foist upon the nation.

There is, then, nothing in Socialism itself to warrant the assumption that it would enthrall the individual to the yoke of a bureaucratic government. There is no reason for regarding as impossible and absurd the assumption that, under a Socialist régime, the bounds of personal liberty would be greatly extended and the scope of government greatly narrowed. Whatever views one may

entertain concerning Socialism, either as an ideal or as a movement, it is necessary and just to weigh seriously the claim, made in the national platform of the Socialist party for the year 1904, that it is "the only political movement standing for the programme and principles by which the liberty of the individual may become a fact." And, further, that "it comes to rescue the people from the fast-increasing and successful assault of capitalism upon the liberty of the individual." That claim cannot be waved aside by mere rhetoric, nor silenced by abuse. The fact remains that Socialism menaces neither private property nor personal liberty. There is nothing inconsistent with Socialism in the idea that Government interference with the individual should be as little as possible.

It will be said, doubtless, that the principles and the programme here sketched are those of Individualism rather than of Socialism as commonly understood. Granted that they satisfy the man who calls himself an Individualist, they are not therefore anti-So-

cialist. Socialism is not the antithesis of Individualism — except Individualism of the "Devil-take-the-hindmost," *laissez faire,* school. To that crude form of individualism, so-called, which accepts the doctrine that "Might is Right," under which the assertion of one man's might destroys the individual liberty of others, Socialists are opposed, just as the enlightened Individualist must be opposed. To the Individualism that is based upon equality of opportunity, the absence of privilege and the destruction of all artificial inequalities, so that Nature's inequalities alone manifest themselves, Socialism is not opposed. Indeed, Socialism comes as the fulfillment of that ideal.

Ninety-nine out of every hundred persons discussing this subject not only regard Socialism, as the antithesis of Individualism without any qualification whatsoever, but they make the far more serious blunder of regarding the present social system — if, indeed, one may use the word "system" to connote our industrial anarchy! — as a sys-

tem of Individualism. Nothing could be more fallacious than this. The Individualism of the Fathers of the Republic, particularly of Jefferson and Samuel Adams, bears no relation to our present system with its ramifications of privilege. Free competition between man and man belongs to the concept of Individualism, but not so the competition, so-called, which takes place between the corporation and the individual. To make an artificial person, for legal purposes, of a great corporation such as the Standard Oil Company, and then to regard a struggle between it and an individual refiner or dealer as "free competition," is to do violence to language and reason.

Illustrative of the confusion of thought upon this subject which pervades all ranks of society, we have the declaration of the Ohio Republican Convention, in asserting the claims of Mr. Taft to be the successor of President Roosevelt, defining the issue in American politics in the year 1908 as "Individualism against Socialism"— the Repub-

lican party and Mr. Taft representing Individualism! Could anything be more grotesque than the application of the word Individualism to the Rooseveltian policies? Could the word be more abused than by its application to the Republican party programme? If Socialism represents one side of the issue fought out in our national politics in 1908, the other side is not Individualism, but Capitalism with its privileges, its invasions of personal liberty, its artificial inequalities and its economic servitude of class to class.

The Socialist ideal may be vain and chimerical, but no thinking person can deny that the influence of the ideal upon masses of our citizens is a wholesome one. The political Socialist movement may spend itself blazing trails for others to follow, opening a way to a promised land it may not enter; but the world will be the better for its existence. Fanaticism, in the name of Socialism, and under its banners, may seek to do away with private property and personal liberty; but

that will be a caricature of the Socialism for which so many millions of earnest men and women in all lands are living lives of consecrated sacrifice.

III

THE MORAL VALUE OF CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

I

IN the popular literature of political Socialism no phrase is more frequently encountered than "class consciousness," and no other phrase has been so bitterly attacked and denounced by the enemies of Socialism. It has provided the text for many of the fiercest onslaughts upon the Socialist theory and the Socialist movement. When Mr. Roosevelt, during his term of office as President of the United States, denounced the Socialists for preaching "the foul doctrine of class consciousness" he simply voiced with characteristic vigor a very common and widespread feeling.

It may be that the Socialists themselves, rather than the doctrine itself, are responsible for this feeling. Possibly much of the bitter hatred with which so many good people regard the doctrine is due to the failure of its

exponents to state it clearly and with wisdom. However that may be, no sane Socialist, and no citizen seriously desiring the peaceful and just solution of the momentous issues involved in the challenge which Socialism brings to society, can afford to treat the matter with light-hearted indifference, or fail to desire the removal of all misunderstanding and prejudice.

Now, there are at least three propositions upon which all earnest and thoughtful men and women, whether Socialists or not, ought to be able to agree:

First: If the doctrine of class consciousness is the wicked thing implied by Mr. Roosevelt's denunciation of it, if it is untrue and anti-social, it should be opposed by all good citizens by every legitimate means; and if the Socialist theory and programme necessarily rest upon it, opposition to Socialism becomes a civic duty; while if there is no such necessary connection between the doctrine and the Socialist theory and programme the

Socialists should frankly and at once abandon it.

Second: If the opposition to the doctrine springs from misunderstanding, due either to the failure of its advocates to state it clearly and wisely, or to the failure of its critics to give it careful and candid study, or to both causes combined, all good men and women, regardless of party or creed, should aim at removing the misunderstanding and welcome every honest and intelligent effort to place the discussion of the subject upon the plane of calm reason, above the evil influence of prejudice.

Third: If, when properly stated, the doctrine is found to be true and helpful, all who have the interests of the Republic at heart should support it, regardless of ignorant prejudice, and should steadfastly and sternly rebuke all demagogues, of whatever station in life, who seek to oppose it by misrepresentation and appeals to passion and prejudice.

There will be little dissent from these platitudes. They form a platform on which all who are actuated by a sense of wise civic patriotism can stand. What we have most reason to desire is calm reasoning concerning all our great social and political problems, entirely free from passion and prejudice; what we have most reason to fear is an appeal to base passion and prejudice. No man is quite so dangerous in a democracy as he who appeals to prejudice instead of to reason. All such demagogues should be sternly rebuked, and the higher their station and greater their influence the more need is there to rebuke them. Upon this and every other great question we need to adopt the attitude indicated by the cry of the ancient prophet of Israel, "Come, let us reason together."

In that spirit, then, I desire to present the moral value of this doctrine of class consciousness as I conceive it. I have long believed that the most bitter and relentless attacks upon the doctrine arise from misunderstanding and misinterpretation of its mean-

ing. That its Socialist advocates are wholly free from responsibility for this, that they have invariably presented the doctrine with candor, thoughtfulness and care, it is impossible to believe. Upon both sides of the discussion there has been much crudeness and recklessness of statement. The temper of the discussion has been wholly controversial, and in the heat of controversy the weaknesses of human nature assert themselves.

II

MOST of those who have assailed the Socialists for preaching the doctrine of class consciousness seem to have believed that the Socialists deliberately aim to create class antagonisms; that they desire to set class against class, and therefore strive to engender a spirit of bitter hatred on the part of the wage-workers against the capitalists. Of course, that would be a monstrous thing to do, a thing to be abhorred by all right-thinking men and women. If that were a true interpretation of the doctrine or of its practical consequences, its preachers would merit the treatment we accord to the unhappy victims of homicidal mania. Every thoughtful Socialist recognizes this as clearly as the most acute critic of Socialism can do.

But indeed the doctrine of class consciousness involves none of the evil implications

thus set forth, and those who oppose it for any such reasons are attacking a hideous caricature only. The class conscious Socialist — just because he is class conscious — seeks, not to create class antagonisms, but to put an end to class antagonisms already existing; not to make the wageworker hate the capitalist, but to teach him *not* to hate the capitalist, and to recognize the injustice and the folly of doing so. That is the function of class consciousness as the ablest exponents of the doctrine have always conceived it, and if they are right the doctrine is not immoral, but essentially moral; not a foul thing to be hated and abhorred of men, but a truth to be welcomed, and its value to a democracy, in which the forces of envy and passion are so easily awakened, is incalculably great.

The doctrine of class consciousness is part of the class struggle theory, which is the very essence of the Socialism represented by the modern political Socialist movement. The supreme aim of this movement is not, as many people suppose, the transfer of all capital-

istically owned industry to the control of a democratic State. That is not the end aimed at, the final goal, but rather a means to the end. It is a programme, the method believed to be best adapted to the attainment of the end desired. And that end, it cannot be too often repeated, is to do away with class antagonism altogether; to put an end to the exploitation of class by class, and thus to end once and forever that war of the classes which characterizes modern society. Failure to bear this in mind, confusion of the end with the means chosen to secure its realization, lies at the root of most of the misunderstandings of the Socialist movement.

The class struggle theory in which millions of Socialists believe, and upon which the political policies of all the Socialist parties of the world are based, is very simple. It was first formulated by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in their celebrated pamphlet, *The Communist Manifesto,* in 1848. Marx and Engels were not the first to discern the

fact that class antagonisms exist. That had been done long before, especially by English and French writers at the beginning of the nineteenth century. They simply discovered the rôle of class struggles in social evolution. They showed that class struggles had existed from time immemorial, ever since the institution of private property was evolved; that history is in the main a record of class struggles. They pointed out that the great cardinal epochs of human history, such as the development from slavery to feudalism, and from feudalism to capitalism, were possible only through the rise of new classes wresting the power from existing ruling classes, through the control of the economic resources most vital to the life of society. That class antagonisms existed before Marx and Engels were born, and were clearly recognized, is evident from every page of human history. Those who think that the class struggle is a deliberate creation of wicked agitators, and that the interests of the capi-

talists and the workers are naturally identical; ought to read the writings of the great political economists — Adam Smith, for example.

III

THE theory may be very briefly outlined as follows: Society as we know it today is the resultant of uncounted centuries of evolution. Our economic and political institutions, our customs and laws, are not inventions born of great inspirations, but developments resulting from human experience and effort. The greatest force in the evolutionary process has been the economic needs and struggles of the race. The material conditions of life, the means of wealth production, have counted for most among all the forces impelling progress. "Man is a tool-using animal," said Aristotle, and we may add that man's history is essentially the history of his tools. It is not contended that *only* economic forces have influenced the evolution of society. The supporters of this materialistic interpretation of history do not deny the influence

of ideals, or religion, or patriotism, for example: they simply urge that the life of man has its roots in the soil of economic conditions. This, in brief, is the view of history which Marx and Engels so clearly formulated more than sixty years ago.

The philosophy of Marxian Socialism rests upon this conception of the economic motivisation of historical development. While the earlier Socialist ideologists believed that the genius of some inspired individual would devise a perfect social state, the advantages of which would be set forth with convincing power, also by some inspired genius, the modern Marxian Socialist rests implicitly upon the laws of evolution. The Socialist state, he believes, will be — indeed, is being — evolved from the existing state as it was evolved from earlier forms of society.

Socialism is not a theory of economic fatalism, however. While the Socialist believes Socialism to be inevitable, he does not believe that the change will come about regardless of human efforts and desires; that

it makes no difference whether we want Socialism or not, whether we work for it or against it. A few addle-pated vendors of half-digested Marxian ideas may so represent the "inevitability" of Socialism, but every Socialist competent to speak for the movement knows that such notions are ridiculously absurd. The Socialist state will not come into being of itself, fully developed, through the automatic operation of economic forces, without the agency of human effort. The very fact that every Socialist is a propagandist, earnestly seeking to convert others to his faith, proves that no such fatalistic belief in the automatic development of Socialism is generally held.

What is meant when it is said that Socialism is inevitable, that it must come as a result of economic conditions, is that economic conditions will make the change to Socialism inevitable in the sense that, because self-preservation is the great law of life, and because the economic interest is primal and fundamental, men and women will be forced

to see in Socialism their only hope and opportunity for self-preservation.

"Man does not live by bread alone," and it would be the height of folly seriously to contend, as some few misguided zealots have done from time to time, that individuals are never actuated by other than economic motives. The splendid idealism and the heroic self-sacrifice of many of the greatest leaders in the Socialist movement, and of its rank and file, prove that such a view is preposterous. Under the spell of a great ideal or passion, individuals have time and again sacrificed every economic interest, and even life itself. Still, it remains a fact that bread is essential to life, and that the preservation of life is the strongest instinct in all animals, man included.

In every epoch of history, ever since private property first became the dominant economic characteristic of human society, there have been class divisions and class conflicts. Master and slave might have, and often did have, many interests in common, but in their

special relation as master and slave there was no bond of common interest. Similarly, the modern wageworker, whose condition is a form of slavery, as Herbert Spencer has very clearly shown, may have many interests in common with his employer, but in the special relation of wageworker and wage-paying employer there is no commonality of interest. If both are Jews they may have a common interest in protecting their race against anti-semitic agitations; if both are prohibitionists, they may find a common interest in the war against the saloon; if both are victims of civic mismanagement they may have a common interest in securing a change in the city government. And any of these interests may prove strong enough to compel both to disregard, for the time at least, every other interest.

They may even have a common *industrial* interest. If, for example, it is proposed to do away with certain industry by legislative enactment, the men engaged in it as wageworkers will very naturally join with their

employers in opposing the legislation, making common cause with their exploiters to the exclusion of other interests which form the basis of the antagonisms which characterize their normal relationship. We have had admirable examples of this temporary cessation of hostilities and union upon common interests in the manner in which the workers in the brewing industry have joined their employers in opposing laws for the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of liquor and in the similar union of employers and employees upon tariff legislation.

Normally, however, all other things being equal, separate and distinct economic interests divide the workers and their employers into hostile classes. No matter what groupings may take place outside of their special relation as employers and employed, within those interests they become hostile classes. It is to the interest of every employer to get as much profit out of the labor of the men he employs as possible; it is equally to their in-

terest to get as large wages as possible, a maximum of the total production. All this was clearly enough demonstrated by Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations*, and has never been seriously questioned by any economist of note. Upon no other basis can the constant industrial warfare indicated by strikes, lockouts and boycotts, trade unions and employers' associations be explained.

Modern industrial society is characterized by the fact that it is capitalistic; that all production is carried on for profit rather than for use. The motive of the ordinary manufacturer is not the production of simple use-values. He is interested only in producing social use-values, things to be sold at a profit. He would as soon manufacture coffins as cradles, idols for heathens as prayer books for Christians, provided only that equal profits might be made. We have a class — numerically large, but relatively small — owning and controlling the great agencies of wealth production and distribution, and a vastly

larger class, which, not owning the great agencies of wealth production, must work for wages. This class, it is evident, must produce a surplus-value over and above the amount it receives in wages if the "silent partners," the investors of capital, are to receive anything in the shape of interest upon their invested capital.

This surplus-value is the bone of contention, the *casus belli,* of the great industrial conflict. And so long as the capitalist method of production prevails that conflict must continue. If all men were angels or saints, it is conceivable that they might agree perfectly as to the division of both labor and wealth. The harmony might be as perfect as the National Civic Federation professes to desire. It might then be possible for the workers and the capitalists so to agree that each class should render the other equal reciprocal service, and that the wealth should be equitably shared. But since men are neither angels nor saints, and perfection is not, and has never been, a human attribute, that har-

mony does not and cannot exist. Instead of harmony we have a constant struggle; unions of workers and unions of employers face each other in a great conflict.

IV

NOW, while this struggle of the two classes is the most obvious feature of our social and political life, dominating, to a large extent, our legislation and politics, it is foolish to contend, as many Socialist writers have done, that a clear line of cleavage runs through modern society, all the capitalist goats being arrayed on one side of it, and all the proletarian sheep upon the other — these two groups including the entire population. This crude concept of the class groupings in capitalist society has been sadly prevalent in the popular literature of Socialism, and it is probably responsible for some of the disrepute in which the class struggle theory is held.

Here is a man who is a wageworker, employed in one of our great factories. About his *status* there would seem to be no room for

doubt. He is a wageworker. But we discover that he has inherited, or perhaps saved, a thousand dollars, which he has invested in railroad stock. How shall we classify him now? He is surely, to the limited extent of his investment, a capitalist, and is just as anxious to get large returns upon his invested capital as the millionaire investor. On the other hand, as a wage-earner, he may be quite as anxious as any of his fellows to get high wages and be exploited as little as possible.

Again: Here is a physician. He has no capital invested, and his only source of income is the practice of his profession. He is not conscious of any affiliation with either of the two classes under discussion. If asked about it he would say that he belongs to a "middle class," a class equally distinct from the capitalist and the proletariat. But if you only recognize two classes where will you place him — with the capitalists or with the workers? Surely not with the capitalists (bearing in mind that he does not exploit the workers, having no capital invested), and

equally surely not with the proletariat (bearing in mind that he is not exploited, and that his income is perhaps several times larger than that of the best paid wageworkers). Much the same may be said of many other professional men — clergymen, artists, writers, and so on.

Or, yet again, take the case of the small employer, the man who works quite as hard as the man he employs, and alongside of him. His income is little or none at all higher than that of the man he employs. True, he is an employer and a capitalist, but he is much more of a proletarian in his sympathies than many a salaried employee, even though the latter may be directly exploited quite as surely — though perhaps to a less degree — as the ordinary manual worker. It is very evident that if we are to insist upon such a classification as will include in one class only those who are in the strict sense of the word proletarians, all others being arrayed in another class against them, the proletarians cannot hope to win by political

methods, since they must be hopelessly outnumbered and outvoted.

Karl Marx died leaving the second and third volumes of *Das Kapital* unfinished. The manuscript of the third volume ends at the beginning of a chapter which he had intended to devote to class groupings. It is more than probable that had he lived to complete that chapter we should have been saved from a great many of those crude expositions of the class struggle theory which remind one so forcibly of the naiveté of that Czar of Russia who drew a straight line across the map when asked to indicate the course to be followed by a railroad that was to be built. Marx was far too wise and acute a thinker not to realize that to range the actual proletariat against all the rest of the people would be equivalent to proclaiming the hopelessness of their political struggle.

He knew very well that outside of the ranks of the actual proletariat there are many who will naturally join it in its struggle against the capitalist class. Some because,

while they are not actually of the proletariat, such as the small dealers, tenant farmers, petty manufacturers, and so on, they feel that their interests draw them closer to the proletariat than to the capitalist class. They are oppressed and exploited by the great capitalist combinations as surely as the proletariat is, though in other ways. Therefore, in furtherance of their economic interests, they are driven into union with the proletariat. Then there are others — a very large class, in fact — who, while they do not feel that their economic interests are such as to ally them with either of the two contending classes, feel the justice of the workers' cause, or recognize the stern facts of the historical movement, and so unite with the workers against the capitalists in the political arena. Finally, there are some, even within the capitalist class itself, who are just enough and humane enough to see that the workers' cause is righteous, or wise enough to see that their triumph is inevitable.

Probably the view expressed by that great

man, Wilhelm Liebknecht, the most astute political leader the Socialist movement has yet produced, comes nearer than any other to the thought of Marx, his friend and master. On the first anniversary of Liebknecht's death the Berlin *Vorwärts,* the leading daily newspaper of the German Social Democracy, published some fragments of an unfinished work by Liebknecht, the manuscript of which had been found among his papers. Emphasis is laid in these posthumously published fragments upon the fact that "the number of those whose interest forces them into the ranks of our enemies is so small that it is becoming almost negligible, and that the immense majority of those who have a hostile, or at least hardly a friendly attitude toward us, take this position only through ignorance of their own situation and of our efforts, and that we ought to exert all our strength to enlighten this majority and win it over."

Liebknecht is very generous in his definition of the working class: "We must not limit our conception of the term 'working class'

too narrowly. As we have explained in speeches, tracts, and articles, we include in the working class all who live exclusively *or principally* by means of their own labor, and who do not grow rich through the work of others.

"Thus, besides the wage-earners, we should include in the working class the small farmers and small shopkeepers, who tend more and more to drop to the level of the proletariat — in other words, all those who suffer from our present system of production on a large scale.

"Some maintain, it is true, that the wage-earning proletariat is the only really revolutionary class, that it alone forms the Socialist army, and that we ought to regard with suspicion all adherents belonging to other classes or other conditions of life. Fortunately these senseless ideas have never taken hold of the German Social Democracy.

"The wage-earning class is most directly affected by capitalist exploitation; it stands face to face with those who exploit it, and

it has the especial advantage of being concentrated in the factories and yards, so that it is naturally led to think things out more energetically and finds itself automatically organized into 'Battalions of workers.' This state of things gives it a revolutionary character which no other part of society has to the same degree. We must recognize this frankly.

"Every wage-earner is either a Socialist already, or on the highroad to becoming one. The wage-earners of the national workshops in France, whom the middle class government of the February Republic wished to make use of against the Social proletariat, went over to the enemy at the crucial moment. In the same way we see how those trades unions that were started by the agents of the German middle-class to oppose the Socialist workmen, either have maintained only the shadow of an existence or have in their turn been swept into the current of Socialist ideas. The wage-earner is led toward Socialism by all his surroundings, by all the conditions in which he finds himself. He is forced to think by the

very conditions of his life, and as soon as he thinks he becomes a Socialist.

"But if the wage-earner suffers more directly and visibly under the system of capitalist exploitation, the small farmers and shopkeepers are as truly affected by it, although in a less direct and obvious manner.

"The unhappy situation of the small farmers almost all over Germany is as well known as the artisan movement. It is true that both small farmers and small shopkeepers are still in the camp of our adversaries, but only because they do not understand the profound causes that underlie their deplorable condition; it is of prime importance for our party to enlighten them and bring them over to our side. *This is a vital question for our party, because these two classes form the majority of the nation.* . . .

"The German Socialists . . . have long understood the importance of propaganda and the necessity of winning over the small shopkeeping class and the small farmers.

"*A tiny minority alone demands that the Socialist movement shall be limited to the wage-earning class.*

* * * * * *

"The hyper-revolutionary dress-parade Socialism, that addresses itself exclusively to 'the horny-handed sons of toil' has two advantages for the reaction. First, it limits the Socialist movement to a class that in Germany at least is not large enough to bring about a revolution; and besides this, it is an excellent way of frightening the main body of the people who are half indifferent, especially the peasants and the petty bourgeoisie, who have not yet organized any independent political activity.

* * * * * *

"We ought not to ask, Are you a wage-earner?' but 'Are you a Socialist?'

"*If it is limited to the wage-earners, Socialism cannot conquer. If it includes all the workers and the moral and intellectual elite of the nation, its victory is certain.*"

Later on Liebknecht still further emphasizes his position by declaring that the Social Democracy is "the party of all the people with the exception of two hundred thousand great proprietors, small proprietors, and priests."

It would be exceedingly disingenuous for me to suggest that Liebknecht's fine utterance is thoroughly representative of Socialist utterances upon the subject. The extremist view — which would so effectually limit the Socialist movement to the dimensions of a mere sect — has been more generally proclaimed in America probably than in any other country. There are historical reasons for this, reasons inhering in the development of American Socialism, into which it is impossible to enter here. But — and this fact is of prime importance — despite all the extremist utterances upon the subject, the actual movement, in its policies, has followed the line of Liebknecht's reasoning. This is shown by the great strength of the party in such states as Oklahoma, by the relatively

large number of professional men and small shopkeepers in the Socialist party, and by the propaganda that is carried on in the colleges and universities.

V.

IT is evident that the class struggle is not an artificial product of the passion roused by reckless and embittered agitators preaching social discontent, but it grows inevitably out of harsh and inequitable economic conditions. To blame the Socialist agitator for talking of the class struggle, and to regard him as being in some way responsible for its existence, is foolish in the extreme. Agitators do not create class antagonisms and social unrest; at most they are but the voices of existing deep-seated discontent.

How foolish it is to condemn the men and women who point to the existence of the class struggle in modern society may be aptly illustrated by an analogue. Suppose a man leaving his home in the morning to go to his work; just as he has reached the street, his wife calls him back and says, " John, do you

not see that it is beginning to rain, and that the heavy clouds betoken an approaching storm? Be wise; put on an overcoat and overshoes and take an umbrella with you and so protect yourself against taking cold." And suppose, further, that the man should turn in anger and scold his wife, saying, "You are a dangerous, wicked woman; you are a most undesirable person. Why do you not keep quiet? Instead of leaving well enough alone, you are always trying to create storms." Such a man would be quite as wise as are those who accuse the Socialists of creating class strife. The Socialist no more creates the class conflict than the thoughtful wife creates the rain. He is in the position of one who gives the workers warning of the storm, and urges them to prepare for it — to equip themselves with overcoats, overshoes and umbrellas, so to speak.

The war of the classes is a fact. Those who seek to deny its existence simply emulate the stupid ostrich, which ignorantly hides its head in the sand to avoid the sight of the

danger that threatens its life. The fact that it does not see the hunter when its head is buried in the sand does not save the poor creature from its fate, nor does the fact that some men vociferously deny the existence of the class struggle alter the fact that it exists or save the workers from the suffering it involves. Nelson's action in placing the telescope to his blind eye and saying, "I can see no danger," was an admirable bit of bravado, but the danger was none the less real because he refused to see it.

It will be observed from the foregoing that this is not at all a moral question. There is not the slightest suggestion that the struggle takes form of proletarian virtue against capitalistic vice. Both classes are motived by their self-interest, and if the worker and the capitalist could change places each would act about as the other now acts. Infinite mischief has been wrought in the past by giving the struggle the aspect of a fight between wicked capitalists and virtuous workers. Who is there that is not familiar with that melo-

dramatic conception? It is one of the greatest merits of Marx's doctrine of the class struggle that it guards the workers against that mischief. The philosophy of the class struggle enables the worker to see that the employer is no more responsible for conditions than himself. He sees that hatred of the capitalists, either individually or collectively, is at once futile, foolish, and unjust.

He understands that the system of production for profit is the result of centuries of evolution; that so long as we have production for profit we shall have one class owning the means of life and subjecting another class to its rule. He learns that as the great epochs of human history have been ushered in by the victory of classes over oppressing classes, the class to which he belongs has a historic mission to fulfill; that the only effective relief for his class that is possible must come from the action of the class itself exerting its powers to destroy the power of the capitalist class to exploit it. That can only be done by abolishing production for profit; by making

the great agencies of production upon which all depend subject to the common control which belongs to common ownership. If that end be attained, it is obvious, class ownership disappears and is supplanted by common ownership, and class rule disappears with class ownership; there can be no class antagonisms in society when class ownership has disappeared. The workers cannot become class conscious — conscious, that is, of the secret of the exploitation of their class, and of the historic mission and function of their class — without getting the inspiration of the great dream of a world without class antagonisms, in which the interest of each shall be the interest of all. Surely that is a spiritual attribute of the doctrine of class consciousness worthy to be reckoned!

When we have grasped the fact that the Socialists do not make the class struggle, but simply recognize it as an inherent feature of our social life, resulting from the nature of our economic system, it becomes fairly obvious that much of the criticism to which they

are subjected is unjust and based upon entirely false premises. It would be quite as reasonable and just to blame the physician for the existence of the disease he discovers in the patient as to blame the Socialist for recognizing the class antagonisms in society. Of course, if the Socialists gloated over the class struggle, if they rejoiced in its existence and desired its perpetuation, they would justly deserve condemnation.

But the recognition of an evil by no means implies approval of it. The physician does not desire the continuance of the disease he discerns in the patient, but its eradication. The sanitarian who directs attention to a dangerous plague spot is not condemned and accused of desiring to maintain it. We know that the frank recognition of the disease and the plague spot is a necessary condition to their removal. It is to the great credit of the Socialists that they are striving, in the face of difficulties of colossal magnitude, to bring about the changes in our economic system which they believe will put an end to class

divisions and struggles. It is part of the Socialist indictment of capitalist society that by its very nature it divides into hostile classes instead of uniting in bonds of common social interest. It is part of its splendid inspiration to millions of men and women in all lands that the Socialist ideal comprehends a world free from class strife, welded into glorious solidarity and brotherhood.

VI

IT is true that Socialist agitators are constantly trying to rouse the workers to class *consciousness*. That is to say, the Socialist propaganda aims at uniting the workers upon the basis of their class interests. For this they are bitterly condemned by many sincere and thoughtful persons. "Why is it necessary," they ask, "to carry on an agitation for the purpose of rousing the workers? If the class struggle is an elemental fact of our social life, produced naturally and inevitably by the fundamental economic relations, surely the workers must already be only too painfully aware of the fact that the struggle exists, and of its nature. What need, then, of a special propaganda to make known the obvious? Why not lay all the emphasis of the propaganda for Socialism upon remedial

measures, rather than upon morbid diagnosis and analysis of existing conditions?"

The critical attitude thus indicated is very common, and its honest questioning must be as honestly met. In the first place, it may be said in reply that no effective advocacy of remedial measures is possible, or even conceivable, which does not lay stress upon the nature and the magnitude of the evils for which remedy is desired. Just as the sanitarian, in order to induce the citizens to take the necessary steps to remove a plague spot, must insist upon the extent of the danger and peril it involves, so the Socialist, in order to induce men and women to work for the removal of the ills and perils of class rule, must dwell constantly upon the nature and magnitude of those ills and perils. It is not from any desire to indulge in morbid and sensational discussion, nor from love of alarmist agitation, that the Socialists dwell so much upon the facts of the class warfare in society, but because there is no other way by means of which they can rouse and enlist the moral

passion requisite for the attainment of their ideal.

But that is not all. There is a yet weightier and profounder reason. Not all engaged in the social struggle, even its worst victims, are conscious of the nature of the struggle. To borrow yet another illustration from pathology, the physician finds his patient weak and ill, suffering from the dread consumption. Suffering, the patient is under the delusion that he has only a severe cold with cough. Because he is under that delusion, he hopes to cure himself by the use of patent cough remedies and other quackeries, a fatally foolish thing. The wise physician knows that he can do nothing effective until he has disabused the mind of his patient of this dangerous delusion, made him realize the nature of his illness, and the folly and worse than folly of dependence upon quack nostrums. Consciousness of his condition is necessary to the patient in order that he may intelligently coöperate with his physician. In like manner it is necessary to educate the

workers to a consciousness of their class, of its position, of its wrongs, of its powers.

Many of the workers who suffer most from the ills of our social system are in a position similar to that of the deluded patient. They are not conscious of the real nature of their trouble, and are the pathetic victims of all kinds of social quackery. Just as the poor sufferer from consumption gets the flaunting advertisements of dangerous nostrums thrust constantly before him, so the worker gets the cheap and nasty nostrums of a multitude of social quacks thrust before him. For example, he is told from the pulpit and from political platforms that there are no classes in America, until he is persuaded that it is so. By the persistent preaching of would-be-moralists and professional reformers, he is made to believe that the whole social problem is one of moral failings merely; that it is not a question of class arrayed against class, but of man against man. He is persuaded that the social evils which impose so much suffering upon him and his fellows spring from the

wickedness of men; that it is all a question of wickedness and greed; of there being more bad men than good ones in control of the great powers of life.

This is the doctrine which Mr. Roosevelt has so powerfully and consistently preached, a doctrine which has always seemed to me to be revolting in its immorality, and fraught with the possibilities of terrible disaster to the nation. It is social quackery in its worst and most dangerous form. That the preachers of such a doctrine, which is essentially immoral and subversive of all social order, should have the effrontery to accuse the Socialists of preaching " foul " and " immoral " doctrines is a remarkable illustration of the potency of class interests to blunt the moral senses and warp the mental vision.

VII

I KNOW that these are terrible words, but they are terribly true. And the time has come when the truth must be spoken. Therefore I dare assert that every preacher of the Rooseveltian doctrine which is here outlined is preaching a dangerously immoral doctrine, a doctrine which, if it ever takes hold of the minds and hearts of the proletariat of America, will lead to such a reign of anarchy and terror as no democracy can ever withstand. No Anarchist ever preached a doctrine so well calculated to let down the floodgates of envy and hate.

If this verdict seems too strong and sweeping, let me ask you to apply to it a very practical test. Here is a laborer; he is out of work, poor, miserable and helpless. All his life long he has lived in poverty, and suffered the pains of the struggle which are the herit-

age of his class. The black shadow of poverty rested over his cradle in infancy, and darkened the pathway of his childhood, filling it with terror. When he ought to have been enjoying childhood's right to play he was obliged to work in a mill, to bear upon his undeveloped shoulders the heavy yoke of toil; to breathe and move to the time set by a soulless machine. Now, from no fault of his own, but simply because of an ill-working social system, he is without work and without the means of obtaining bread for himself and his family. In his ears from early dawn till night brings exhaustion and forgetfulness there rings the cry of his wife and baby for bread, for life. The picture is not overdrawn — there are many thousands of such men in our great cities.

As he goes forth into the city in a weary quest for bread and work he sees confronting him the splendor and luxury of the man by whom he was employed. He contrasts his poverty with the wealth and splendor, and the sinister thought is born within him that

he was robbed of his fruits of his toil to enrich that employer. Not as a result of any agitator's appeals to his envy, but as the bitter fruitage of his hard life, he has come to regard the rich employer as the robber by whom he has been despoiled. Let there be no mistake about this: the natural state of mind for such a man as the one described is hatred and envy of the rich and powerful. It is an instinctive attitude: agitators can do no more than fan the flames of passion into fury.

Now, go to that man with this gospel of "individual morality," of which we have heard so much from our professional reformers in high places. Teach him that his sufferings are due to the misdeeds of individuals, of "malefactors of great wealth." Teach him with all the authority of Church and State that he and his loved ones endure the pangs of hunger and hopeless poverty because his employer is not a just man, or because some financier has the instincts of a

brute and a ghoul. What effect can you expect such teaching to have upon his mind, other than to deepen and intensify his natural, instinctive hatred and envy? Have you not given authority and sanction to his worst and most dangerous thoughts? When you have made him believe that the wickedness of individuals has brought such terrible suffering upon himself and those he loves, will you marvel that he should cherish in his heart bitter hatred of the individuals whom you have taught him to regard as responsible, or that the bitter feelings should lead to desperate deeds?

Can you not see that such preaching feeds the most dangerous anarchy the world has known? That it kindles fires of hatred which may at any time burst into unrestrained fury and destroy society? No frenzied creature, mad with the sense of injustice and filled with passion for revenge, ever yet took the law into his own hands, grasping torch or knife or bomb and working destruction,

who was not the victim of this delusion which the opponents of Socialism are constantly preaching in the name of "morality" and "good order." That we have not had a reign of terror in consequence of the constant preaching of this Rooseveltian doctrine, is due to the fact that its preachers have not been able to impress the masses with a passionate belief in it. Yet they have not wholly failed; we have not altogether escaped its evil consequences, for every careful observer must have observed that, as a result of the wild denunciation of "malefactors of great wealth," we came perilously near the point where an appeal to popular passion against a Rockefeller or a Harriman would secure the passage of almost any legislation, however defective or vicious.

The fact is that the capitalists are no more to blame than the workers; our social problems are not due to the machinations of a few magnates, who must therefore be singled out as "malefactors," but to the great forces of economic development which condition the

lives of us all, rich and poor alike. To preach otherwise is to preach falsehood in the name of truth, and to incite red-handed anarchy.

VIII

BUT if we take our victim of the social struggle and give him the message of Socialism, he is soon turned from the path of anarchy and hatred. It is no accident that in these lands where Socialism is strongest Anarchism is weakest and that recourse to dagger and bomb is most frequent where the Socialist movement is weakest. The Socialist propaganda reaches such a victim of the social struggle as I have described and teaches him at the very outset that no individual is to blame for conditions so terrible; that the evils do not arise from the wickedness of individuals, but from great social causes developed by centuries of evolution. It teaches him that the capitalist is no more to blame than himself; that we are all creatures of conditions.

He gets from the Socialist propaganda a

new view of the social problem. He sees it as it is, as a product of the struggle of centuries. He sees that his old hatred of the capitalist was wrong, illogical and unjust. When a man becomes conscious of his position as a member of the working class, and understands that the class struggle is not an artificial thing created by scheming and wicked men, but a necessary and natural condition of the existing economic order, he can no longer entertain bitter hatred toward the capitalist, nor harbor desire for revenge. Instead of a passion for personal revenge, he becomes mastered by a sense of class loyalty and relies, not upon individual acts of violence, but upon the cooperation of his fellows in furtherance of their class interest. And this coöperation of the working class is not to the end that punishment may be inflicted upon the members of the present ruling class, but that the economic basis of society be so changed as to make it impossible for classes to exist.

It is one of the incomprehensible marvels

of our time that so few of the critics of Socialism see this very obvious truth. Here we have a great world-wide movement, embracing many millions of people of all lands and races, taking the unlearned and blind discontent of the world, teaching it and guiding it away from mad, abortive violence into the broad, free channels of patiently organized political effort, and the critics are blind to this glorious mission. I make the claim for the Socialist movement of the world that it is the one great conscious agent which is teaching the wrongfulness and the futility of hatred and violence, and guiding the ever-growing discontent of the disinherited and despoiled millions into channels of safe, patient, constructive effort.

IX

IT would be idle, of course, to deny that class consciousness *may* manifest itself in violent uprisings. In countries where, as in Russia, for example, the great masses of the people are deprived of the political powers which make peaceful, legal action possible, violent rebellion may be the only means open to them in their struggle for freedom. Bitter as such a struggle must be, terrible as its methods must be, the righteousness of such rebellion can scarcely be questioned by Anglo-Saxons.

And it is surely better that there should be a collective struggle for freedom, likely to prove successful because of the great army of fighters, than that there should be numberless futile and abortive acts of violence by individuals. In lands where the workers can use the ballot to redress their grievances

experience shows that the struggle for freedom invariably takes the form of a political struggle. For us in America, therefore, the choice is between individual acts of violence and collective political effort along legal, constitutional channels. The former is the logical outcome of the philosophy of which Mr. Roosevelt has been a most conspicuous exponent; the latter of the philosophy which guides and inspires the Socialist movement.

For the reasons which I have thus briefly indicated I have come to regard the Socialist teaching of class consciousness as a great ethical force in the world, of incalculable value. Where the doctrine of class consciousness makes headway, there abortive acts of revengful violence are rarest; where class consciousness is rare, there it is a common thing for enraged individuals to seek revenge. The greatest safeguard against the assassin's dagger and the incendiary's torch is the ballot in the hands of class conscious workingmen. Class consciousness is the one thing

that can save the nation from individual revolt, blind, stupid and cruel.

To make a discontented workingman class conscious is to make him a safe man, whose revolt is always against the system and never against individuals; it is to make him a just man, too wise and just to hold individuals responsible for the evils of the system; it is to make him a wise and patient man, too wise to attempt to make things better by venting his personal anger in savage deeds, patient enough to work with his fellows year after year to bring about the economic changes which will make freedom possible for all mankind. Finally, to make a workingman class conscious is to bring hope into his life, light into his eyes and music into his heart. It is to hold out to him the vision of millions of his fellows uniting with himself, establishing through the power of their citizenship conditions of life which will make possible the realization of human brotherhood, and set all men free to live lives of greater purpose and

beauty than we have seen in our brightest and holiest dreams.

For that the prophets lived and died. For that the unconquerable Human Spirit has struggled and suffered through the uncounted ages. For that, too, the brave pioneers went forth into the forest undaunted and laid the foundations of this great Republic and freely gave their life blood to cement its pillars.